

RETURNING HOME

Transplantation requires a lifelong commitment from you. To minimize complications and make your recovery smoother, it is essential that you carefully follow the instructions given to you prior to discharge. Your Transplant Team will continue to provide you with support and medical follow-up after you have been discharged from the hospital.

OFFICE VISITS

Lab work and visits to your doctor occur on a more frequent basis right after your transplant. Initially, visits are weekly and then they gradually decrease in frequency. Lab work is done in the Faculty Practice Laboratory, 530 First Avenue, first floor, between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. (Before you take your morning medications).

It is extremely important that morning immunosuppressive medication (Prograf or Neoral) be *taken after having your blood drawn*. This ensures that an accurate blood level can be obtained and medications can be closely regulated. All other medications may be taken before your lab work is done.

Later in the post-op period, as you become more stable, the frequency of the office visits will decrease. Some days the doctors will only need to check laboratory work. On these days you will not see the doctor, you will only go to the laboratory between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. for blood work. The coordinators will contact you if there are any problems or medication changes.

When you are discharged from the hospital you will be seen in our outpatient clinic. It is located at 403 East 34th St. on the third floor. Be sure to bring your medication list with you and any lists of BP (blood pressure) monitoring or tube drainage.

PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN

Although you will continue to work with your Transplant Team, it is very important that you maintain your relationship with your primary care physician (family doctor). You should tell both your primary care physician and the transplant team should of any standard medical problems you may experience. The flu and common colds may take longer to go away, but you should have your family doctor evaluate these problems. Make sure you get prior approval from your Transplant Team before taking any prescription or over the counter medication including herbs or before agreeing to any procedures recommended by other physicians. The medication or procedures may interfere with your immunosuppression.

DENTAL CARE

Good oral hygiene and regular visits with your dentist are important. Please contact your Transplant Team to make any necessary arrangements before scheduling your dental appointments. You'll need to take antibiotics before any dental care is provided. The dentist will prescribe the medication for you, but you must check with the Transplant Team before taking it.

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OPHTHALMOLOGY

It is important to have annual checkups with an ophthalmologist. The immunosuppressant medication called Prednisone may cause cataracts and result in changes in your vision. You should schedule your first post-operative visit with the ophthalmologist when you are on your maintenance dose of Prednisone. Ask your coordinator when you should make that appointment.

OBSTETRICS/GYNECOLOGY

Female patients generally resume their menstrual cycle after transplantation. High doses of Prednisone may stop menstrual flow, although ovulation (the time when you are fertile) will continue. Therefore pregnancy can occur even though your menstrual flow isn't normal. Discuss acceptable birth control methods with the Transplant Team. If you are considering becoming pregnant, please discuss this with your transplant surgeon or nurse coordinator. Certain medications may be adjusted.

All women should have yearly pelvic examinations and Pap smears. (You do not need to take antibiotics before examinations).

IMMUNIZATIONS/VACCINATIONS

Annual flu shots are recommended. It is important, however, that you receive the dead virus vaccine to avoid the possibility of becoming infected. Ask your coordinator about other vaccinations before receiving them.

FOLLOW-UP

If you had a liver cancer you will be instructed to make an appointment to see our oncologist, Dr. Alec Goldenberg or Karen Hagloff. His office is located at 157 East 32nd Street on the second floor and his phone number is (212) 689-6791.

PRESCRIPTIONS

Your Transplant Team may be able to identify a pharmacy for you that will send all your monthly medications to you, providing your insurance company agrees.

Many medications interact with your immunosuppression. For this reason you **MUST** always consult with a member of your Transplant Team prior to taking any medications prescribed by any physician.

HYGIENE

You must shower with soap and warm water daily. Lather the incision and T-tube (biliary drain) with a pure soap such as Ivory, and let the warm water run over them. Bathing is not permitted immediately postop. Steri-strips applied to the incision will begin to peel and can be taken off. If you go home with staples in place, they will be removed in the transplant clinic when you come for your first or second office visit.

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If you have a T-tube, it will be removed about three months after your transplant . You may have a -cholangiogram (a special x-ray using dye to allow the doctor see how the liver and bile ducts are functioning) prior to removing it. This test is done in interventional radiology located on the 2nd Floor in TISCH Hospital.

SUPPORT GROUPS

It is recommended that you continue with any support groups that you have been involved with prior to your transplant including private and group sessions (e.g. AA, TRIO, LOLA). If you would like to become more involved, ask your transplant social worker for more details.